

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /083 W
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P R 271333Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0294
INFO AMEMBASSY DARESSLAAM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 1676

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, BC, RH
SUBJECT: BOTSWANA'S VIEW OF FRONTLINE MEETING

1. SUMMARY: EXTAFF MINISTRY PERMSEC MPOTOKWANE REPORTS
HOPEFUL SIGNS FROM LUSAKA MEETING JULY 25 OF FRONTLINE STATES.
ON RHODESIA, WHICH TOOK UP ESTIMATED 70 PERCENT OF FOUR-HOUR
MEETING, FRONTLINE REPS REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED SHARP DISSATIS-
FACTION WITH FAILURE OF PATRIOTIC FRONT TO RECONCILE THEIR
DIFFERENCES. RE NAMIBIA, FRONTLINE "STRONGLY ENCOURAGED"
NUJOMA TO ACCEPT INVITATION TO MEET IN NEW YORK TO DISCUSS
TRANSITION. END SUMMARY.

2. MINEXTAFF PERMSEC MPOTOKWANE ATTENDED FRONTLINE MEETING
LUSAKA JULY 25 AS MEMBER OF GOB DELEGATION HEADED BY VICE
PRESIDENT MASIRE. AT SOCIAL OCCASION FOLLOWING HIS RETURN
HERE JULY 26, MPOTOKWANE REVIEWED MEETING RESULTS.
NORMALLY QUIET AND UNCOMMUNICATIVE, HE WAS ALMOST ANI-
MATED AS HE DESCRIBED WHAT HE TERMED "POSITIVE AND
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ENCOURAGING" RESULTS OF A FULL AFTERNOON OF MEETINGS
ON RHODESIA (70 PERCENT OF THE MEETING) AND NAMIBIA
(30 PERCENT).

3. RHODESIA: MPOTOKWANE SAID FRONTLINE STATES WERE
SHARPLY CRITICAL OF PATRIOTIC FRONT (PF) REPS NKOMO
AND MUGABE FOR THEIR FAILURE TO MAKE ANY PROGRESS TOWARD

OVERCOMING THEIR DIFFERENCES SINCE OAU MEETING IN LIBREVILLE. MPOTOKWANE ATTRIBUTED FRONTLINE FORCEFULNESS TO IMPATIENCE, ESPECIALLY WITH CONTINUED LACK OF CO-OPERATION OF THE TWO LIBERATION ARMIES AND PROSPECT OF A "TWO-ARMY STATE". MPOTOKWANE REFLECTED GREAT SATISFACTION WITH FRONTLINE UNANIMITY IN INSISTING ON MERGER OF FIGHTING FORCES BUT ALSO IN REITERATION BY PRESIDENT NYERERE, AS SPOKESMAN, THAT PF HAS NO CLAIM TO EXCLUSIVE POLITICAL ROLE. "WE ARE NOT HERE TO CHOOSE POLITICAL LEADERS OF ZIMBABWE," NYERERE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING.

4. ACCORDING TO GOB REP, IT WAS VICE PRESIDENT MASIRE WHO DRAMATIZED THE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE PF BY ASKING: "WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF TOMORROW THE UK RELINQUISHED POWER?" MPOTOKWANE SAID THAT, BY THEIR REPLIES, BOTH NKOMO AND MUGABE SHOWED THEY WERE WHOLLY UNPREPARED TO ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY WHATSOEVER. THIS REPORTEDLY PROVOKED A STRONG REACTION, WITH SUCCESSIVE FRONTLINE SPOKESMEN TAKING THE VIEW THAT SMITH WAS IN WEAKENED CONDITION, THAT HIS ELECTIONS WERE MEANINGLESS AND THAT INDEPENDENCE WAS "WITHIN REACH". (IN LATER COMMENT TO DCM, MPOTOKWANE DID EXPRESS MISGIVINGS THAT IT WOULD REQUIRE LUCK AND SKILL TO PREVENT CIVIL WAR BETWEEN NKOMO AND MUGABE FACTIONS, EVEN SHOULD BLACK MAJORITY RULE BE NEGOTIATED AND SHOULD ELECTIONS BE HELD TO EFFECT
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TRANSFER OF POWER.) AT THIS POINT MPOTOKWANE COMMENTED HE THOUGHT THE SITUATION WAS FAVORABLE FOR AN INITIATIVE AND WONDERED WHAT HAD EMERGED FROM THE TALKS IN WASHINGTON BETWEEN SECRETARIES OWEN AND VANCE. (I SAID I HAD RECEIVED NOTHING AS YET.) IN SUMMARY, MPOTOKWANE, WHO IS NORMALLY RESERVED, DESCRIBED HIS MOOD AS "HOPEFUL AND ENCOURAGED", IN VIEW OF THE TOUGH AND UNITED STAND OF FRONTLINE, INCLUDING NETO AND MACHEL. IN REPLY TO MY QUESTION, MPOTOKWANE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW HOW THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING WOULD BE CONVEYED TO MUZOREWA OR SITHOLE, WHOSE POINT OF VIEW WAS NOT REPRESENTED AT LUSAKA MEETING.

5. NAMIBIA: MPOTOKWANE ESTIMATED SOME 30 PERCENT OF THE JULY 25 SESSION WAS DEVOTED TO NAMIBIA. IN ESSENCE THE DISCUSSION WAS AN ADMONITION TO SWAPO REP NUJOMA TO GO TO NEW YORK TO DISCUSS THE TRANSITION. AS ON RHODESIAN ISSUE, FRONTLINE REPS REPORTEDLY REFLECTED THE ASSUMPTION THAT INDEPENDENCE WAS POSSIBLE AND THAT SWAPO SHOULD BEGIN SERIOUSLY TO PREPARE FOR IT. AT ONE POINT MPOTOKWANE COMMENTED THAT SWAPO SUFFERED FROM SAME PROBLEM AS PF; NAMELY, FEAR OF ELECTION RESULTS.

NUJOMA IS TRYING TO ASSUME POWER FOR SWAPO IN AN INDEPENDENT NAMIBIA IN THE SAME WAY IT ACHIEVED PRESENT STATUS AS RECOGNIZED REPRESENTATIVE. SWAPO KNOWS OTHER ORGANIZED GROUPS WILL CONTEST THE ELECTION AND FEARS THE OUTCOME. MPOTOKWANE SAID SWAPO EARNED LITTLE SYMPATHY AND NO SUPPORT FOR ITS ATTITUDE.

6. COMMENT: MPOTOKWANE IS NORMALLY CAUTIOUS AND NON-COMMITTAL. HIS HOPEFUL REACTION TO LUSAKA MEETING WAS SURPRISING AND ENCOURAGING, AN ATTITUDE THAT SEEMED TO DERIVE IN LARGE MEASURE FROM HIS FEELING THAT THE GOB'S STAND ON THE ISSUES WAS BEING VINDICATED.
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Sent Date: 27-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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